ATTACHMENT A. ARTICLE — *FORTUNE MAGAZINE* — FEBRUARY 1945

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RICHMOND TOOK A BEATING

FROM CIVIC CHAOS CAME SHIPS FOR WAR AND SOME HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

BEFORE the war Richmond, California, was a drab little industrial city sprawled along a low-lying point on the northeastern shore of San Francisco Bay. Twenty-four thousand people lived in one-family houses on the unshaded streets, chiefly supported by the 4,000 who worked in the Standard Oil refinery, the Ford assembly plant, and a dozen smaller industries on the marshy waterfront. Storage tanks dotted the hills of Point Richmond, and the smell of oil hung heavy in the air. It was not a pretty place (Richmond people who could afford to lived outside the limits on the El Cerrito hills, and motorists knew it only as a place to drive through), but it was law-abiding, financially sound, with good schools and a good government. The city manager, James McVittie, had been in office since 1920; Walter Helms had been school superintendent since the town's incorporation in 1905; Mattie Chandler had been Mayor for four terms; and Tom Carlson had been city attorney for fourteen years. Richmond prided itself on its efficiency and self-sufficiency. The depression of the thirties was past. Things were going along fine and most people were pretty well satisfied. Everybody knew everybody else, and marketing on Macdonald Avenue left plenty of time for chatting on street corners, admiring the view of Mount Tamalpais across the bay.

Today the view is about the only thing left of the old Richmond. Four Kaiser shipyards and a prefabrication plant have been built on the waterfront. One hundred thousand people live where 24,000 lived before. Huge barracks-like public-housing projects cover the mud flats between the harbor and the town. The sidewalks are blocked by gaping strangers in cowboy boots, blue jeans, and sombreros. Women in slacks and leather jackets and shiny scalers' helmets wait in long lines to buy food. Pale-haired children and mangy hound-dogs wander the treeless streets. Nobody knows anybody. Children

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PHOTOGRAPHS FOR FORTUNE BY ANSEL ADAMS AND DOROTHEA LANGE

SHIPYARD WORKERS WITH BULGING POCKETS SWARM ALONG BULGING MACDONALD AVENUE

go to overcrowded schools in two shifts. The jail is jammed. Streets crack under heavy traffic. Overloaded sewers back up.

City expenditures rose from $800,000 in 1940 to $1,800,000 in 1944; the income from property taxes from $700,000 to only $1,070,000.

Old Richmondites are torn between pride and resentment. They are proud of the yards, of the ships sliding into the bay (one-fifth of all the Liberty ships were built at Richmond). But they feel their privacy destroyed. A few of them have moved away, to Berkeley or Oakland, many of them do their shopping in San Francisco. "I don't like to be tramped on by dirty cowboy boots when I go in a store." Yet they are pleased with the booming business brought to town by the newcomers: properties have risen 300 and 400 per cent in value; the circulation of the Richmond *Independent* has jumped from 6,000 daily to 35,000; shopkeepers are making five or six times what they made before. ("You know why the merchants close up at all? Just because they're tired. Just exhausted. Just completely exhausted. We closed last year at four o'clock the day before Christmas. Sent away $400 to $500 worth of business. Just got tired.") Bars make net profits up to $8,000 a month; dirty cell-like rooms rent for $1.50 a night, and decent three-room apartments in private houses for $120 a month. But most Richmondites have had enough of the war boom, enough of the Okies and Arkies and Texies.

The newcomers, 75,000 of them, have their own side of the story. Many were not anxious to come in the first place; they were motivated by good wages, promises of good housing, and ideas of patriotism. They were thrown into unfamiliar surroundings among unknown and sometimes hostile people. The single men make good money and families with several members working get on fine; but a man with a wife and children to support doesn't come out too well. Everything costs a lot and wages aren't always so high as they are cracked up to be. An average shipyard worker makes $61 a week. He spends $18.30 for food, $8.50 for rent in a housing project, $6.75 for recreation and household expenses, $6.10 for war bonds, $6.70 for taxes, $5.50 for clothes, $2.45 for transportation. Hospital-plan payments take 50 cents; $2.04 goes into savings, and $4.16 is left for incidentals.

The family men are not buying diamond bracelets or fur coats for their women. In the clothing shops they buy work clothes, maybe once a year a $65 suit or coat. On payday they line up at the banks to put money in savings accounts or send money orders home. Some will go home as soon as the war is over (a good many have gone already), but some, particularly the Negroes, want to stay in Richmond—or at least in California.

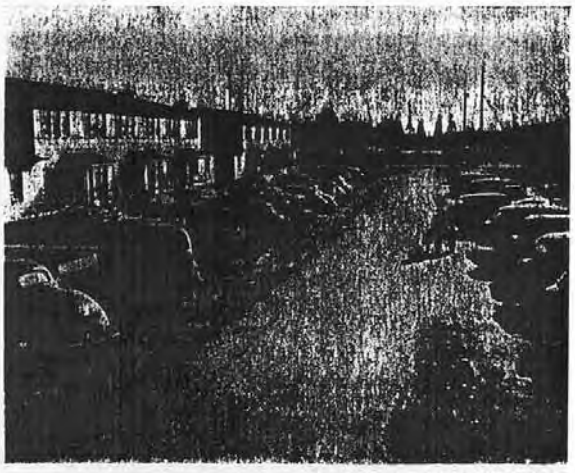
About 14,000 Negroes live in Richmond where fewer than 400 lived before. They are not segregated legally in the housing projects, but most of them live on the same "streets." Although a few merchants complain that Negro trade drives away their white customers, most stores are glad to take the Negroes' money and at least one (Jay's clothing store) welcomes Negroes and whites with the same cheerful friendliness whether they buy a $15 fedora or just come in to cash a check. "We're not humanitarians, it's just good business." Some of the Negroes have bought houses. One has opened an independent hole-in-the-wall tailoring establishment from which he takes $800 a month. Even though he pays $240 a month for his concession And he is treated better than he ever was at home. "You won't find me going back to Texas."

RICHMOND CALLS FOR HELP

Richmond is full of self-pity, but it resents pity from outsiders. A year ago things got so bad, city finances so low, living conditions so close to impossible, that the city officials cried out for help. But they prefaced the cry with a logical recapitulation of what had happened to Richmond, and why.

In 1939 the members of the Chamber of Commerce, notably Fred D. Parr of the Parr-Richmond Terminal Corp., saw a chance to take part in the preparedness program of the U.S. and at the same time boost Richmond. Negotiations were begun with the Maritime Commission, with Henry Kaiser and W. A. Bechtel of the Six Companies. A year later Mr. Kaiser showed definite interest in Richmond. And the final conferences turned out to be even more fruitful than the far-sighted Mr. Parr had dreamed. Construction of the first shipyard was begun in January, 1941, and two years later four shipyards, containing twenty-seven ways and basins, and a prefabrication plant had been built on the filled-in shore. As the number of workers increased, as recruits from all over the country poured in, Richmond, the self-sufficient little city with facilities for 24,000 inhabitants, was swamped. There was no room for those who were there already. More kept coming.

The small hotels and rooming houses quickly overflowed. Families slept in cars and on cots in the downtown shops. The Federal Public Housing Authority and the Farm Security Administration put up the first of 14,000 housing units and dormitories on the mud flats between the harbor and the town. The Maritime Commission built another 10,000 units (later taken over by FPHA), and private builders added 6,000 small houses. Altogether about 30,000 dwelling units were constructed between 1941 and 1943. But 90,000 men and women were working in the yards, 10,000 in other Richmond industries, and many of them had to find shelter outside the town, had to find transportation to and from the yards. New roads were built, old San Francisco–Oakland ferries were reconditioned, discarded New York El cars were brought across the country and set on a new electric railway running twelve miles from



Oakland, but tired welders and scalers and riveters still had to stand in line to get anywhere.

Yet in spite of the confused and often distressing conditions in which they lived, the men and women who flocked to Richmond did a remarkable job of shipbuilding. In less than three years 486 Liberty ships were delivered. The average construction time per ship was 48.5 days as compared to a 78.5-day average for all other Liberty shipyards.

The year 1943 saw the peak of the shipyards' employment, the peak of Richmond's anguish. The city fathers spoke of their town as "a municipal cripple" or "the wounded city"; Mattie Chandler refused to run for reelection as mayor; the city manager, James McVittie, began preparation of a report designed to wring federal funds from Congress and he called it "An Avalanche Hits Richmond." (The report was later summarized under the title "A City Earns the Purple Heart.") Mr. McVittie, who averted the city's collapse but almost collapsed himself, wrote that "even normal social controls could not be maintained. The result was congestion and utter confusion. Richmond was literally bursting at the seams."

What happened to Richmond was an example of what has happened to many other U.S. cities during the war—an exaggerated example, not overdramatized by the city officials. The truth was plain in the crowded schools, operating in three and sometimes four shifts; in the filthy trailer camps around the edges of town; in the untended children swarming the muddy compounds of the housing projects; and in the puzzled faces of uprooted, unwelcomed Oklahomans and Texans. The city was broke. The new industry and the housing projects, government-owned, were tax-exempt and the city property tax did not begin to meet expenditures.

RICHMOND GETS ITS SECOND WIND

The city took a fresh breath when financial help came from the federal government. Money began coming in from Lanham Act funds and FPHA payments in lieu of taxes: $450,000 altogether in 1943 to be used for hiring more policemen and firemen and nurses and social workers, for repairing streets and sewers, building new schoolrooms. It helped, but it wasn't

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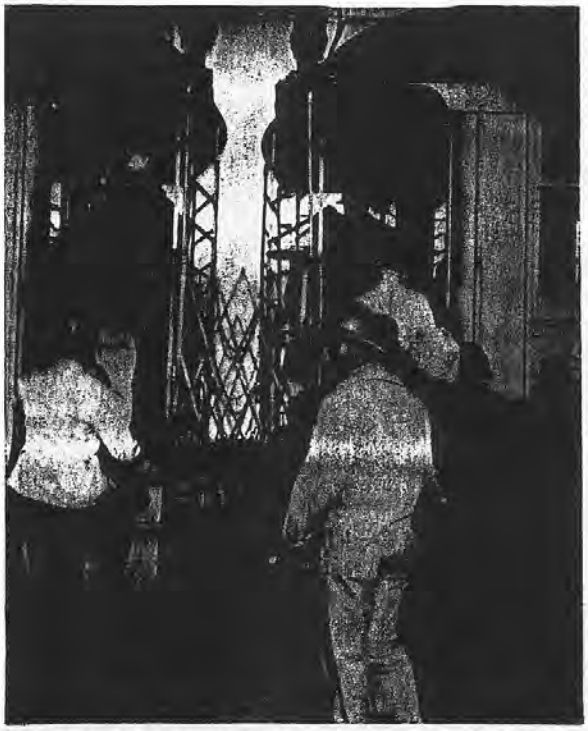
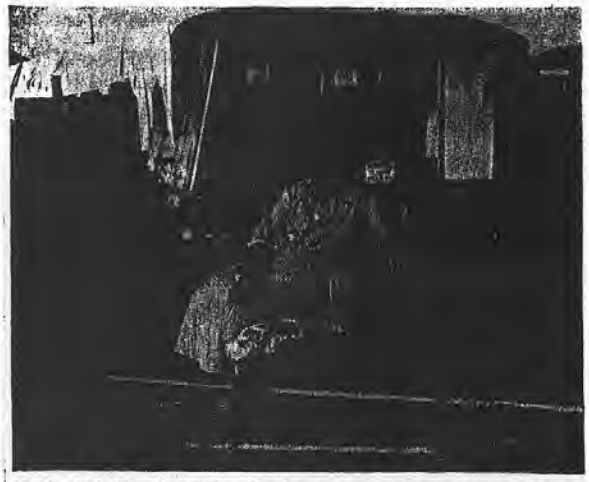


THERE ISN'T ROOM FOR EVERYBODY

Richmond is so crowded that many of the shipyard workers live out of town, some as far as fifty miles away, some just beyond the city limits. Here the day shift packs into old New York El cars, which now provide transportation between the yards and Oakland. The Negro woman (below) and her husband have paid $100 down on the land now occupied by their $15 trailer. They plan to build a house out of the pile of secondhand boards. When the house is built they will send home to Arkansas for their four children. The land is undrained; there are no sewers, no electricity, no street lights. They haul their water. The trailer couple from Sioux City, Iowa (at the right, below), have lived on the edge of Richmond for two years. He is a welder at the yards and this is his Sunday off.



ARKANSAS SHARECROPPER HERE TO STAY

NOTHING IN IOWA TO GO BACK TO

enough. Mr. McVittie and Tom Carlson, the city attorney, renewed their pleas to Congress. And in the meantime they took steps of their own. They installed parking meters on the principal streets, taxed businesses a flat annual $10 and $1 a head for each employee, and slapped heavy fines on alleged lawbreakers. These fines created tenseness and hostility between shipyard workers and townspeople. Many newcomers felt (and still feel) that they were persecuted and stigmatized as hardened lawbreakers. "If you wait for your wife on the station platform you're picked up as a vagrant."

Justly or not, the police made an average of 4,000 arrests a month—mostly newcomers. "Drunks, knifers, rapers, attackers, hop-heads, harlots, wife beaters, murderers—anything you like." Even an ordinary drunk was fined $25; a drunken driver had to pay $250. ("We hit them heavy," says Mr. McVittie. "They can behave or pay.") In November, 1944, the police court collected $34,000 in fines as compared to $800 in the same month in 1937, and during the last fiscal year police-court fines brought in $235,000, 10 per cent of the city's gross revenue.

In the summer of 1943 the Federal Works Agency provided funds, under the Lanham Act, for hiring seventy-five additional policemen. The city could find only eight men who wanted the jobs. But since then, with more federal money, a much larger force has been hired. Serious crimes were fewer last year than in 1943. "We haven't had a white murder for eight months," says Chick Richards, editor of the Richmond *Independent*, "and only four Negroes in that time." It takes a fairly hardy customer, however, to walk into the Nut Club ("Richmond's Nuttiest Joynt"), the Denver Club, or the Red Robin. There are no open gambling houses or houses of prostitution, says Police Judge Leo Marcollo, but "plenty of girls proposition in bars and take their clients to rooming houses, and plenty of those ex-convicts at the yards run games."

The chief trouble is that there isn't enough to do. The twelve movie houses can't keep everyone amused, even though four of them are open all night. There are few recreation halls and few tenant organizations in the housing projects. "There's not much they can spend their money on but booze." Policemen still walk their beats in pairs.

The federal government has recently allocated additional funds to Richmond. Recognizing the city's plaint that it is suffering from "service-connected needs for rehabilitation which are far beyond its own capacity to finance," the FWA will provide more than twice as much this year for recreation, fire and police protection, and schools. Since 1940 the enrollment in city schools has increased from 6,400 to 20,800. A year ago children in the schools nearest the crowded housing projects were going to classes in four shifts, beginning before dawn in winter, quitting after dark. Truancy rose to 25 per cent of the students, many children never registered at all, and no truancy officer had time to check the truth when wandering gangs of boys swore they had been in school in the earlier shift.

New rooms have been added to schools and three new schools have been built; nevertheless double sessions are still necessary in all but the senior high school, and 3,000 children are still classed as truants every day. This year juvenile police officers will handle an estimated average of 240 cases (160 boys and eighty girls) a month, or 2,880 a year. The delinquency arrests run at a rate of eighty-seven per 1,000 juveniles as compared to the California rate of twenty-five per 1,000. In many of the juvenile-delinquency cases both parents work at the yards and the children are on the loose all day or all night. A ten-year-old

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MINNESOTA: "We came here two years ago to work and we *work*."

MISSISSIPPI: A young student welder gets on fine at the yards.

OKLAHOMA: She has a son in France, works as a common laborer.

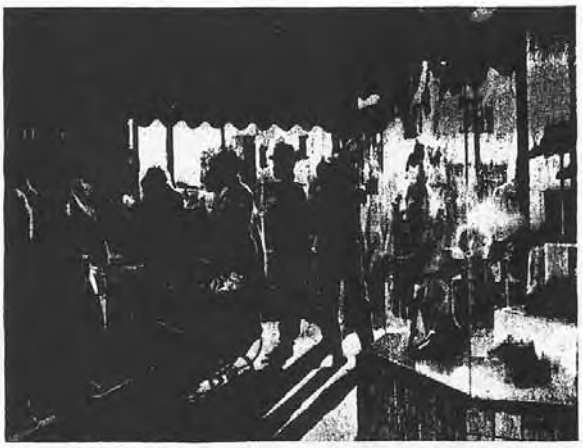
KANSAS: Son of an Oklahoma Indian chief, now a Kaiser machinist.

OKLAHOMA: They're all kinds. "I'm a full-blooded Okie myself."

TENNESSEE: From the mountains of Tennessee to the swing shift.

CHINESE WOMAN: She hasn't missed a day's work in two years.

WAR VETERAN: Now a shipyard worker. He has a wife and child.



PLENTY OF MONEY to spend in the Richmond movies and bars, restaurants and shops. "They know what they want, too. Stetson hats and Arrow shirts. This is Nome in California. This is History."

boy carrying a shoeshine box around the taverns can pick up $2 in a few hours and there is no one to supervise his spending or his actions until he runs against the law. City officials think the problem will be with them as long as the war lasts. And they are convinced that its effects will carry into the future.

The city government admits that Mr. Kaiser has been cooperative in trying to take care of the people he brought to Richmond. The nursery schools near the yards are excellent, and so is the Permanente Field Hospital with 175 beds and sixty physicians. The hospital takes workers (not the members of their families) who belong to the hospital plan and pay 50 cents a week. Eighty-seven per cent of the workers belong to the plan, but that leaves thousands of newcomers to be cared for by the local hospital and doctors. The Richmond hospital has sixty-five beds; the town twenty-nine physicians. There are three Red Cross nurses, eleven public-health nurses, three clinic doctors, and five sanitary inspectors.

The worst sanitation problems have been inadequate sewers, careless disposal of garbage, rats and cockroaches. But things are better than they were: new sewers have been built during the last year; people in the housing projects are learning to keep lids on garbage pails; rats have been mostly cleaned out and there are fewer cockroaches. The closest thing to an epidemic came with fifty cases of poliomyelitis in 1943. There was none this year, no typhus or typhoid. There is a high rate of venereal disease, and a lot of tuberculosis cases develop in men and women who are doing unusually hard work. The state and the U.S. Public Health Service run clinics for tuberculosis, venereal disease, immunization, crippled children, and well babies. Eighteen hundred births were registered last year. At least three out of four of these babies were born into temporary, precarious surroundings, to parents with no ties to the land, no roots in the community.

RICHMOND IN THE FUTURE

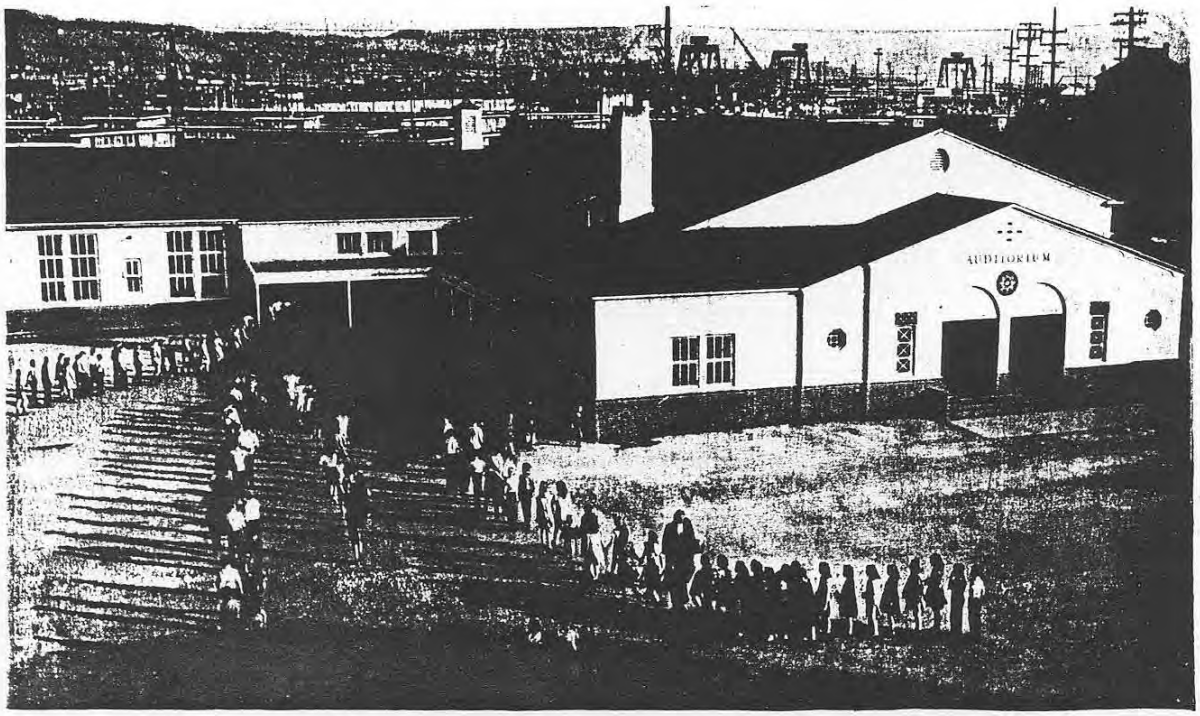
Estimates made at the shipyards show that after the war 63 per cent of the newcomers want to stay in California, 34 per

cent in Richmond. If the 34 per cent stay, Richmond will have a postwar population of approximately 50,000. Richmond's feeling about the future is just as confused as its feeling about the present: pride and self-confidence are mixed with dismay and self-pity. The city officials are making their plans on the assumptions that only one of the four shipyards will continue in production and the housing authority will tear down the temporary buildings now in use. If the housing projects are torn down the people who stay will need living quarters, and Richmond intends to build a community of workers' homes grouped conveniently around the new industrial sites made available by the removal of three shipyards. A peacetime city of 50,000 people can use all the schools and public buildings that Richmond needs now for the emergency handling of 100,000. If the city is to attract industries it must be a good place for industrial workers to live, and to provide decent living conditions Richmond will need money. The city lists the municipal improvements needed for its "rehabilitation," including a civic center, a new library, firehouses, hospital, and police station. The estimated total cost would be somewhere between $6 and $7 million.

The members of the Chamber of Commerce, hurt by the broadcasting of the city manager's report to Congress and the publicity given Richmond's plight, agree that the federal government should provide wartime services for the wartime workers, but they say that Richmond can face the future by itself. If the government will just repair the actual damage done to the city's physical properties, just tear down the housing projects and leave the waterfront to the private industries they feel sure will come, there will be enough employment, enough cash, enough incentive to build a nice industrial city ("not a factory town") with trees, parks, community centers, modest homes for workers, and a thriving business district. "Richmond faces the future with confidence and serenity," they say. "Its citizens believe the future is greater than the past."

OUTSIDE THE SCHOOLS

But Mr. McVittie points out that if the present tax rate is continued after the war Richmond will have only about $300,000 a year available for capital improvements and it would take over twenty years to finance the "rehabilitation" on a pay-as-you-go basis. Richmond already has a bonded indebtedness of almost a million dollars. The city government makes clear to the federal government that Richmond was chosen for its war job because of its favorable location and excellent harbor. "The city is proud of the job that has been done. It is not the purpose of this report to grumble or complain about the resulting confusion, congestion, headaches, and heartache. But . . ." the federal government ought to tell Richmond what it is going to do with the shipyards and the housing projects and then help Richmond finance the postwar plan—just as it rehabilitates its human war casualties. If it will do that, Richmond, by foresight and planning, can thereafter return to normal, self-sustaining civic and community life.



SHIPYARD WORKERS' CHILDREN GO TO THIS NEW SCHOOL ANNEX IN TWO SHIFTS A DAY